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IV.—ITEMS FROM THE GĀTHIC PAHLAVI.

As Sāyaṇa is at times extremely difficult, and at others as amusing as he is erroneous, so all other translations of our older books share these peculiarities.

And as time has shown us that the 'horned' Moses was not a necessity, and that a certain Greek word means a 'stag,' and not an 'elephant,' so we have at last through years gradually become aware of the errors of the old Pahlavi commentaries on the Gāthas. But we have a little overdone that business, and for a very natural reason; for while all the other commentaries nearly (with the exception of some of those on the cuneiform and other such inscriptions) are easy at least to read, the Pahlavi translations, if worked up as they ought to be, plunge us at once into toil which requires actual decipherment at every step, and which is naturally often far more harassing than the treatment of the 'good' Pahlavi of the books, for while simpler sentences are clear at a glance in both kinds of Pahlavi, in the classical forms the original translators were helped by the context in the more difficult parts.

But in the Gātha commentaries, context often gives us no aid at all. Accuracy may be wholly wanting in one place, where the most valuable results await us at the next word. As a consequence many of us (unconsciously) clubbed together to keep up our appearances while we ignored or (unintentionally¹) misrepresented the whole subject. And one of the least critical remarks that we have ever made was that the translations of the Gāthas depend upon a crude application of 'etymology,' without any report of the actual special sense. We have indeed at times traces of attempts in 'etymology' as entertaining as anything in the great Indian translator. Take, for instance, the word *khrafstrā* in Y. 28, 5, acknowledged on all hands to be difficult as to its etymology (though I believe all accept its somewhat ill-bred application, describing the sinners either as 'verminous,' or as actual 'wild

¹ I confess that I for one began my studies on the commentaries almost with the predominant wish to discredit them.

beasts'). I for one among others made my proposal that the word was Zend for *kalpa* + *āçitīr̥n* 'flesh-gnawers'; but I did so with hesitation. Some venerable scholiast in almost forgotten centuries saw the word accidentally divided in some MSS, or, indeed, he thought he might divide its elements, referring *khra* to the root of *khratu* = 'understanding' and *stra* to *star* = 'to scatter,' and so gave us what is, though practically an excellent derived meaning, yet a very defective piece of etymology, for it gives no account of the *f*.

I do not know that others have made themselves very merry over this particular case, for few have been aware of it; but it certainly seems to me to be a lame enough attempt. We must not, however, forget our own shortcomings; nor are we at all so sure that the original translator did not anticipate our own procedure and 'emend' his text itself to leave out the *f*, or, like a certain modern translator, he *conceived of it* as emended. And what shall we think of a superlative termination—say, for example, such as *-est* in *kind-est*—being divided from its base and translated separately and erroneously? Yet this is what happens with *sev-išāi* in Y. 28, 5. *-ištāi*, wonderful to say, is rendered as if it were a form from *iš* = 'to wish,' and for this there is no defence whatsoever, for it was not intended at all as an ultimate etymological explanation of this superlative termination as indicating the 'wished,' and so the 'best' or 'most.' But there is a very powerful series of facts which act well as an *excuse* for it, though in no sense as a justification. For we have clear evidence from these that this treatment was wholly *isolated*, and was due to some exceptional circumstance operating adversely upon the mind of the early expositor. We are scandalised at this translation of a termination in one case, and we are not to be blamed. But why was not the same thing done with the same termination *-išt-*, in the very next line (see *mazištem*)? And so we may ask with regard to *vahištā* at Y. 28, 8; *vahištem*, Y. 28, 9; *aojištō* at Y. 29, 3; *mairištō* at Y. 29, 4; *acištā*, Y. 30, 5; *spēništō*, next line; *khraozhdištēng*, next word; *āsištā*, Y. 30, 10; *mazištām*, Y. 31, 13; *vāzištō*, Y. 31, 22; *vaēdištō*, Y. 32, 7; *razištā*, Y. 33, 1; *nazdištām*, Y. 33, 4; *mazištem*, Y. 33, 5. Notice especially the case of the same identical word *sēvištō* recurring at Y. 33, 11; then see *spēništā* at Y. 33, 12; *āsištem* (sic) at Y. 34, 4; *spēništā*, Y. 43, 2; *vaēdištō*, Y. 46, 19; *fraēštaoñhō*, Y. 49, 8; *nazdištām*, Y. 50, 3; *zevištyēng*, Y. 50, 7 (?); *aibi-bairištem*, Y. 51, 1. No

such curiosity as this translation of this termination occurs at these texts.

I do not notice a single further recurrence of this mistake in the Gāthas, though there is one in the commentary on the Hōm yasht (see my edition of Y. ix. 1-48, deciphered and edited, with collation and variants of all the MSS, in the Journal of the R. Asiatic Society, of July). This odd treatment of *-ištāi* at Y. 28, 5, therefore obviously arose from some exceptional cause. Some early scribe, holding every syllable to be sacred, saw this one detached, and so explained (!) it.

Another very curious work of supererogation was to translate every terminal suffix containing *d* as if it were a form of *dā* = 'to give,' even in such a word as *kadā* = 'when,' though this is an extreme case. This extra word occurs sometimes when the old scholar had given us a 'priceless' indication in his translation of the main body of the word.¹ I can only account for the phenomenon by saying again as before that every syllable of the text seemed so sacred that every shred of it was reproduced. But once we are aware of this crotchet, it really does us little harm, frequent as its recurrence may be; for, as I have said often enough, it would be puerile to expect a smooth rhetoric in such a place.

Aside from such instances as I have hinted at, where else is the false etymology in this entire section? Here are some 223-odd words: where are there more than a few units falsely etymologised as to their radical sense?

And are we to find fault with the *correct* etymology! Beginners in Gāthic criticism have (some few of them) not yet learned how even to find fault. Having once heard the remark that the Pahlavi translator 'etymologises,' they have utterly blundered in applying it.

As I have pointed out before in this Journal,² the actual consecutive terms of the Gāthic texts are in themselves for the most part very plain, the hapaxlegomena excepted, the crux of the whole matter lying more in the shades of the derived meaning,

¹ See as to *gūšōdūm* = *gūšōdvem*, the *-dvem* is ridiculously translated as a form of *dā*, but *gūšh*, in the face of all 'etymology,' is rendered correctly 'hear.' A feeble 'etymology' would have given us 'shriek ye' or 'roar'; cf. the Indian *ghush*, but the Iranian word means just the contrary, as the ancient translator first taught us, basing his conclusions solely on realism.

² See 'The Gāthas as Consecutive Words.'

and in the syntax. How could a translator into Pahlavi or into any other language help 'etymologising' when reproducing such terms as we have for the most part in Y. 28. Not that the grammatical forms are at all so closely represented for us; but a little critical discrimination shows that the defects even as to this particular have been grossly exaggerated.

I remember a by no means inconsiderable student who was scandalised at 'verbs being rendered by nouns' (!), plus a pointing pronoun; but such a rendering should be regarded as most effective—'mine *is* the gladdening' is as good as 'I gladden.' Recollect that we should especially claim for the renderings that they are a mass of overworked material, which, of course, rather heightens than lowers their value to the close expert, for the more numerous are the strata of consecutive treatments, the keener becomes our hope of the gems of antiquity.

Neryōsang, it may be said here, is never slavishly to be followed. His translations were, as he avows, made from the Pahlavi texts of the translators; but he often misunderstands them, or wilfully departs from our present texts of them. And if the Pahlavi translators report old meanings familiar to themselves through hereditary teaching, but derived from Zend-gāthic texts long vanished and differing from those which they had just written on the paper before their eyes, how much more probable is it that the Sanskrit translator expressed opinions which varied from those of our present Pahlavi translations, and from a similar cause—reporting ideas which he had inherited independently of our present Pahlavi texts (for he never repeats any Pahlavi texts: he gives us only the Zend and his Sanskrit)? But whatever be their faults or their value, as the commentaries Pahlavi, Persian and Sanskrit were the sole original source of all our knowledge, critical or otherwise, in the past, we must weigh them laboriously for our estimates in the present and the future, for they have by no means finished their work in any sense whatsoever. Every teacher should be examined in them, of course, as an indispensable preliminary to his functions; but this is by no means all.

We should especially, therefore, study the places where they have established crucial points. For instance, I can not trace much etymology in *anizār-vindishnūh* for the difficult *aghzhāōhvamnem* of Y. 28, 3; yet, 'having an unweakened acquisition' is not so bad for 'imperishable' or 'not transitory,' though this case is not very significant.

Then, where is the error in *āmūkht-am* for *khsāi* (at Y. 28, 4) 'I have learned' or 'I have taught'¹? This translation of *khsā* [cp. Ind. (?) **khçā* (?)] rescues a word abandoned by our great expounder of Pāṇini as 'an invention of Kātyāyana's.' How could it be an 'invention of Kātyāyana,' when it stood in the Gātha hundreds of years before Pāṇini existed, even putting him at 400 B. C. and K. at B. C. 300? and where is the 'etymology' between *khsā* and *āmūkhtano*, though the Pahlavi translator had been repeating its forms for centuries as the only word for this *khsā*, and yet we are supercilious over his 'etymology'? Then with 'etymology' alone as a guide, Neryōsang would never have rendered *yānāiš* (Y. 28, 9), which means 'on account of boons,' by *ḡubhena* 'on account of a benefit.' *Yāna* means even a 'wagon' sometimes in Indian; at best it means 'giving a helping on,' and so a 'way,' a 'path.' Without Ner. the Pahlavi *yān* too would be thought a mere 'transliteration' (of course it is Zend at the second stage, with the same Iranian meaning 'boon, favour' as we know from Ner.). Then, who can not see how fine a distinction we have suggested to us by the Pahlavi translator at Y. 28, 11, where he insists that *nīpāōñhē* is a 1st singular middle = 'I protect'? This strengthens Whitney's hesitating view as to *arcase*, *ṛñjase*, etc. (see his Grammar, on the *s*-aor.). It is as fine a point of the kind as was ever made; not that it is fully followed as yet, for *nīpāōñhē* looks also quite like an infinitive. So far from 'etymologising' over our unfortunate *taviščā* at Y. 29, 1, the translator (?) not only refuses to translate, but gives us our only serious text. See the connection 'On me come wrath and the blow . . . contemptuous treatment, and *the thief*,' not the fatuous words '*and power*.' The word is not our *taviščā* of the *textus receptus*, but *tāyuščā*; the old Pahlavi-Avesta sign for *y* was only a little shorter than that for *u*, and the one pushed the other out in the course of time. Moreover, an *a* which may be 'long' in the Indian *tāyu* may very well, indeed, be short in Iranian, at least as it is reported. See, for instance, even the long *a* in *katāra*, Iranian, and short *a* in *katarā* in Indian. Non-experts should be informed at this point that our present very striking Avesta alphabet was worked up from an old Avesta-Pahlavi one. The ancient Gātha stands in a character which is newer than that of its own commentary. In fact, it may well be that the sanctity of the Gātha caused that inspiration which

¹ See Y. 28, 11 *āmūzāi* = 'mayst thou teach' = Zend *sishā*, Ner. *çikshāpaya*.

effected this remarkable achievement, one of the most striking feats in all ancient scholarship. The development of the wonderfully complete Zend alphabet was doubtless slow and gradual, and at one time it became approximately fixed, but to this day it has never been completely ranged into order. Here it has got into mishap. *Tavišcā* = 'power' in a platitude beside *tāyušcā* = 'and a thief,'¹ *tarāftārīch*, *aīgham barā dūzdēdō*; and we should so restore, thanking our translator (!) this time for not translating, nor heeding the word *tavišcā*, which he had just been obliged to write on the paper before him. Then his rendering of *uštā* as *uštā ahurem* 'salvation lord,' in Y. 29, 2, certainly casts light on the other *uštā-composita*. I do not follow the 'translator,' indeed, just here, but the enlightened public should fully understand that we highly value suggestions which bear on passages not immediately before us. Half the praise that our greatest *Guru* got is for suggestions that are not accepted for the immediate point, *but they bear with power upon the general effort*. *Frīnēmnā* in Y. 29, 5 = 'praying' is helped out by Neryōsang's *prabravīmi*, for the Pahlavi *pranāmam* = 'I bend in praise or prayer' was once misread *fravāmam* (same signs); see the Parsi-Pers. But Ner.'s *prabravīmi* has its derived 'I praise' as well as its 'I speak forth.' The Pahlavi translator 'muddles' over *vafūš* at Y. 29, 6, but I can not see that he especially 'etymologises': it was natural enough to refer it to a *vap* in an 'evil' sense. And how about the other twenty-odd words in the same strophe, all correctly sketched as to their general sense? At Y. 29, 7 the Pahlavi reporter falls into trouble with an unaccountable *vakhshīnēd*. 'Etymology' was, however, not his betrayer here, but a shattered text: *vakhshīnēd* comes from *-vōi*+the *khsh-* of the next word! *Gāvōi*, like hundreds of other words, was split into parts such as *ga+vōi* (in some ancient text; see the irrational variants everywhere). He renders the *gāvōi* really twice, as often. *Gāv-* is *gōspend*, and *vōi* was joined to the *khsh* of the wrecked *khsh-(vīdemcā)*. But at the very next words, *hvō-urushaībyō*, the old scribe gives us again one of the fairest restorations in literature, first applied, so brilliantly, by Darmesteter (a point which delighted Roth, who showed me the passage in Darmesteter's essay). What sort of a text had we been 'etymologising' with

¹ The cow as 'stolen away' was the typical woe of the border-state. We have elsewhere a weird and poetic picture of her, 'moaning on her dusty road.' See also SBE. XXXI, at the place.

for so long a time? *hvō-urushaēibyō* was once *hvarushaēibyō* = *avō khūrḍārān* 'food for the eaters,' as the Pahlavi translator had been insisting for centuries.

[Even the process of change is clear enough. The *ō* of *hvō* is epenthetic (sic), i. e. $a + u = \bar{o}$, as always; the *u* is anticipated from the *u* of *u(ru)*, and *u(ru)* is the common rolling of the *r* for *ru*; *hvō + urush-* is *hva(+u) + (u)rush-*—that is to say, it is *hvarushaēibyō*, mechanically divided as words are at every step in the MSS. (As to the epenthesis, see also *moshu* for *ma(+u) + shu* (cp. Ind. *makhshú*) and *moghu* = *ma(+u) + ghu*. I have collected other examples, which await printing.)]

Then who gave us *aēvō* = 'solus' at Y. 29, 8, having saved us from the same at Y. 29, 6? (See the emphatic need for *aēvā* = 'thus' here, in this latter place. The writer (Z.) was describing the 'way' in which the chief had (not) been appointed. 'Not thus is he found' is far better than 'not a single one,' which would be a blunder here, and the translator tries to check us.) *Ashāyedō-mīnīshnīh* (the compositum = 'of joyless mind') shows a translation of the termination in *khshān-mainē*, an erroneous and superfluous attempt (see above on the translation of *d* in *kadā*, etc.); but *ashayed* is a good general rendering, and *ashayedō-mīnīshnīh* does no harm, though its *a* privative came from the old shape of *kh*, which once stood in the quasi-Pahlavi character, and this old, original character for *kh* represented at the same time the latter *a*; hence our *ashāyēdō*. But how about the mass of words before and after, all correctly indicated as to their main general sense, though the grammar staggers (from accidental reasons)? We learned our own grammar first from that of the translators, shattered as it was. So far as they are translators, they taught us all our beginnings, and ingratitude is not attractive.

Let me close with two striking results. One was *añtarē mrūvē* as 'interdico.' Strange indeed that some good writers should have blundered with their etymology when the Pahlavi translator is so rough, and even vehement, pointing straight at the truth. He seems even to be scolding posterity: *mīn dōstīh ī levatman valmanshān javīdāk yehevūnam* 'from friendship with them I am separate'; *vībhinno bhavāmi* (so Ner.) 'I interdict, I say them off.' This does not look much like 'I say among'; yet people have read this strong passage falsely, till quite lately, from 'etymology' (weak-kneed enough, I candidly admit; but it was not the etymology of the Sanskrit or the Pahlavi translator, but

in the teeth of it). Then even the rare 2d pl. middle *-dvē* would have been seen in *dādraghzhōduyē* [so our Oxford C. 1 (D. J. or J. 2)] at Y. 48, 7, years before it was seen, if we had learned our Gāthic Pahlavi. *Mūntānō . . . dahishnō dārishnō* 'ye whose is the holding' is as good as 'ye who . . . hold,' and it is urgently repeated in the gloss *aīgh tānō*. Here neither Neryōsang nor the Parsi-Persian see the slightest trace of a 2d plural. The Pahlavi solution is from some ancient scholar who lived *after* and not before Ner. and the other commentators. Mark well, I make nothing of the sagacity or stupidity of any one of the Pahlavi commentaries: I am going straight to the results; and sometimes the least sagacious preserve the predecessor's hint. And so throughout: the Pahlavi transcribers go on repeating still more ancient translators and writing upon lost texts which have perished from quasi-immemorial times, etymologising throughout, but in the overwhelming preponderance of instances correctly. Etymology can not be avoided in a language once practically identical with the things translated. Early Pahlavi was once later Zend, and the Gāthas themselves were soon rhapsodised in a slipshod tongue. The texts were a tradition, just as the *Ṛigveda* is a tradition, and a marvellous one, indeed; and they each held their ground from the same quaint cause—that is to say, from metre. That there were explanations from the very first needs not to be affirmed.

Commentaries in the Zend speech as distinct from the Pahlavi first appeared (we have even some examples left to us; see Y. xix., etc.). As the language became more Pahlavi, the terminations began to crumble, as they did in English; and Pahlavi more and more, like our own MSS, took its place. Priestly earnestness assisted the degeneration of treatment. Venerable attempts were of course worked over times without number, and the latest transcriber had but little suspicion of the treasures which he revealed.

So the translations are often richest for research where they are the worst as mere renderings. What we need the most is not even their vast body of correct root-etymology, so dear to a beginner: the thing for a true constructor is the seeming heap-rubbish out of which glints here and there the gold of discoveries.